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82D CONGRESS
1st Session

SENATE

REPORT
No. 214

IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

APRIL 11 (legislative day, MARCH 26), 1951.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. ELLENDER, from the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 984]

The Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, to whom was referred the bill (S. 984) to amend the Agricultural Act of 1949, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass with amendments.

HISTORY OF LEGISLATION

Throughout World War II and since the termination of hostilities, it has been necessary to import agricultural workers from foreign countries in order to assist in the production of adequate supplies of food and fiber for domestic consumption in the United States and for export. Principal sources of foreign farm labor have been Canada, the British West Indies, and the Republic of Mexico, and many workers have been recruited in Puerto Rico. In 1948 the United States and Mexico reached an agreement on the method by which workers from Mexico would be imported for temporary employment in agriculture. In October 1948 Mexico terminated the 1948 agreement and a new agreement was approved and became effective August 1, 1949. The program of importing farm workers from Mexico is now operating under that agreement.

The 1948 agreement established a system of importing workers from Mexico without subsidization by the Federal Government. This system was continued by the present international agreement whereby the private employer, upon certification by the United States Employment Service that he cannot obtain adequate domestic farm labor, recruits workers in Mexico with the joint approval of United States and Mexican Government officials and under their direct supervision. Under the old and present agreement the employer pays the entire cost of transporting the worker from Mexico

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and return, and he pays for supplies and subsistence during the period of movement. He also makes other guaranties to the worker under the individual work contract and is required to post a bond of $25 for each worker to guarantee maintenance of status and departure of the alien agricultural worker.

In addition the 1948 agreement provided that 10 percent of the worker's salary be withheld and then returned to him upon termination of the contract. This provision was deleted in the 1949 agreement. The present agreement also differs from the 1948 agreement in that it contains detailed procedures for handling of complaints of workers against employers violating their contracts and cases of discrimination against Mexican workers.

Violation of contracts by the workers has caused considerable expense to the employers by forcing forfeiture of the departure bonds. Often the worker has returned to his home in Mexico, and while no expense may have been incurred by the Government or the employer in such return, failure by the worker to report his departure to the Immigration and Naturalization Service has caused unnecessary confusion and expense to agricultural producers in this country. On the other hand, many contract violators have been apprehended, and the costs of apprehension must be paid by the employer. In certain instances, this liability has amounted to considerable expense to the employer. Therefore, the agricultural producers in the United States have protested vigorously against the requirement for posting of bonds.

The program of importing farm laborers from Mexico is confronted with a major problem in the form of illegal immigration of workers commonly known as wetbacks. Instead of entering the country at official points and according to law, thousands of workers swim or wade across the Rio Grande River and enter illegally. Because they are often put to work by United States employers before their backs are dry, they have been commonly referred to as wetbacks. The wetback situation presents great economic and social problems. The illegal immigrant is always subject to deportation, and under such circumstances, the wetback will work for wages far below a level which will enable him to maintain a proper standard of living for himself or his family. At the same time, their employment undercuts the going wage of domestic farm labor and thus forces the latter to accept substandard wages also, or move on to other work.

This process not only provides the wetback and the domestic farm laborer with grossly inadequate incomes, but it also affects the status of Spanish-speaking citizens of the United States and retards their assimilation into the normal social and economic life of the country. While the present international agreement addresses itself to the wetback problem, illegal entry of Mexican citizens into the United States has increased greatly and conservative estimates place the number of wetbacks entering the country in 1950 at more than a million. The Immigration and Naturalization Service in the year ending June 30, 1950, deported nearly 500,000 aliens back to Mexico, and undoubtedly as many were never apprehended.

In connection with negotiations to modify the existing agreement, representatives of the United States and Mexico met in conference at Mexico City beginning January 26 of this year to discuss the various

problems noted above. During the course of the conference, the Mexican Government served notice that it was terminating the 1949 agreement.

The United States delegation to the conference was headed by Carl W. Strom, consul general of the United States in Mexico. Chairman Allen J. Ellender of the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry and Congressman W. R. Poage of the House Committee on Agriculture were appointed delegates from their respective committees and served as advisers to the United States delegation.

As an alternative method to the recruitment of farm workers in Mexico by private employers and subsequent posting of compliance bonds, it was suggested at the conference that an agency of the United States recruit such workers and that the Government of the United States guarantee compliance with the individual work contract. It was understood that the United States Government is not now authorized to undertake such a program. The United States delegation agreed to have such legislation introduced in the Congress, and since its enactment would require time for following legislative procedure, the Mexican Government agreed to continue the present international agreement until June 30, 1951.

The conferees then agreed to recommend to their respective governments that the following program be established:

1. The Mexican Government would establish migratory stations at such places in Mexico as might be agreed upon by the Mexican Government and the United States Government.

2. Recruiting teams consisting of Mexican and United States representatives would then recruit agricultural workers at places near the residences of the workers, and the workers would be brought to the migratory stations by the Mexican Government.

3. Following screening by the United States immigration officials, the workers would be transported to reception centers in the United States at the expense of the United States Government. Return transportation from the reception center to the migratory station by this Government would also be guaranteed.

4. At the reception center in the United States, the worker would be free to choose the type of agricultural work he desires, and the employer would be free to select the workers whom he desires. Proper supervision of these negotiations by representatives of both Governments would be maintained.

5. Transportation from the reception center to the place of employment and return would be at the expense of the employer, as well as subsistence and other guaranties as required by the individual work contract.

In accordance with the understanding at the conference, S. 984 was introduced on February 27 by Senator Ellender and referred to your committee. Hearings were conducted on the bill and testimony received from officials of the Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of Agriculture, farm organizations, employers of agricultural labor, and officials of labor unions. Two other bills, S. 949 and S. 1106, were also considered during the hearings and at subsequent executive sessions of the committee.

Evidence on several aspects of the problem was presented and discussed thoroughly during the sessions of the committee. More com-

plete utilization of domestic farm labor through Government subsidization, supplemented by the proposed program for importing agricultural workers, was recommended to the committee. However, a program providing Government transportation of domestic laborers within the country and establishment of overnight stops or additional reception centers would involve considerable expenditure by the Federal Government. At the same time, evidence was presented to the committee that the shortage of farm labor was usually in the supply of "stoop" labor, a term used because the worker is required to stoop or bend forward to do his work. The natural inclination of workers to accept higher paid or easier work than such labor often creates a shortage of these workers and agricultural producers have found it necessary to import foreign workers to make available an ample supply. This stoop labor is just as essential as other operations in the production of food and fiber and therefore, your committee believes that provision should be made at this time for supplying the foreign agricultural labor found necessary to supplement the domestic labor force, and the establishment of additional programs for recruitment, transportation, and placement of domestic farm laborers should be considered as the need arises.

ANALYSIS OF BILL

Section 501 authorizes the Secretary of Labor to—

1. Recruit workers in Mexico for temporary agricultural employment in the United States;

2. Establish and operate reception centers at or near the places of actual entry of such workers into the United States for the purpose of receiving and housing them while arrangements are being made for their employment in, or departure from, the United States;

3. Provide transportation from recruitment centers in Mexico to such reception centers and from such reception centers to recruitment centers after termination of employment;

4. Provide such workers with such subsistence, emergency medical care, and burial expenses (not exceeding $150 burial expenses in any one case) as may be or become necessary during transportation authorized by paragraph 3 and while such workers are at reception centers;

5. Assist such workers and employers to negotiate contracts of employment; and

6. Guarantee the performance by employers of provisions of such contracts relating to payment of wages or the furnishing of transportation.

The bill also provides that the Secretary may recruit Mexicans already in the United States for agricultural employment. That provision has been amended, however, to require that such workers must have originally entered the country legally. S. 984 further provides that workers recruited under the program authorized by the bill will be free to accept or decline agricultural employment with any eligible employer, and to choose the type of agricultural employment they desire. Likewise, employers will be free to offer agricultural employment to any workers of their choice not under contract to other employers.

While the purpose of S. 984 is to authorize this country to carry out its part of the agreement reached with the Republic of Mexico, the bill as introduced authorized recruitment of agricultural workers from other countries in the Western Hemisphere, pursuant to arrangements between the United States and such countries, and from Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The bill as reported would confine the program to the Republic of Mexico, since extending it to other countries would change the present method of recruitment of farm workers in those countries for temporary employment in the United States.

Section 502 provides that no workers shall be made available to any employer unless such employer enters into an agreement with the United States to—

1. Indemnify the United States against any loss by reason of its guaranty of such employer's contracts.

2. Reimburse the United States for expenses, not including salaries or expenses of regular department or agency personnel, incurred by it for the transportation and subsistence of workers in amounts not to exceed $20 per worker.

3. Pay to the United States, in any case in which a worker is not returned to the reception center in accordance with the individual work contract, and is apprehended in the United States, an amount determined by the Secretary of Labor to be equivalent to the normal cost to the employer of returning other workers from the place of employment to the reception center, less any portion thereof required to be paid by any other employers.

The bill as introduced provided that the employer pay for all expenses up to $20 incurred by the Government in recruitment and transportation of workers. The committee believes normal salary and other expenses of Government officials administering the program should not be charged to the individual employer of the workers recruited by such Government employee and recommends amending the bill accordingly.

S. 984 as introduced also provided that in the case of a worker violating his contract, the employer would pay the Federal Government an amount equal to the cost of returning such worker from his place of employment to the reception center. Your committee has amended the bill to require such reimbursement only when the contract violator has been apprehended within the United States and since the original provision was subject to the interpretation that the employer would have to pay the costs of apprehension, new language is recommended to clarify the intent of the bill that the employer pay only the normal cost of returning such worker from the place of employment to the reception center.

Section 503 provides that no workers recruited under this program shall be available for employment in any area unless the director of State employment security for such area has determined and certified that sufficient domestic workers who are able, willing, and qualified are not available at the time and place needed to perform the work for which such workers are to be employed, and that the employment of such workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of domestic agricultural workers similarly employed. Your committee believes the State director will be in a position to respond immediately to any real needs in his area for additional workers and can protect the welfare of domestic farm laborers already in the area.

Section 504 provides that workers recruited in Mexico shall be admitted to the United States subject to the immigration laws, and that no penalty bond shall be required which imposes liability upon any person for the failure of any such worker to depart from the United States upon termination of employment. Section 504 also provides that workers already in the country and who otherwise would be eligible for admission to the United States may remain to accept agricultural employment pursuant to arrangements between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. The bill as introduced did not subject retention of such workers for agricultural employment to future arrangements between the two countries.

Section 505 exempts agricultural workers imported from Mexico from social security benefits and taxes, and withholding of, or payment of, such taxes by the employers of such workers. The section further provides that such workers shall not be subject to the head tax levied under section 2 of the Immigration Act of 1917.

Section 506 authorizes the Secretary of Labor to utilize the facilities and services of other Federal and State agencies as may be agreed upon, to accept and utilize voluntary and uncompensated services, and to cooperate with the Secretary of State in negotiating and carrying out agreements or arrangements relating to the importation of agricultural workers from Mexico.

Section 507, as amended, defines the agricultural employment for which workers can be recruited as that covered by section 3 (f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, or section 1426 (h) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended. The bill, as introduced, provided that in addition to the work considered to be agricultural employment by the above-cited statutes, the term "agricultural employment" would include horticultural employment, cotton ginning and compressing, crushing of oilseeds, and the packing, canning, freezing, drying, or other processing of perishable or seasonable agricultural products. Your committee believes it unwise to enact greatly different definitions of common terms in various statutes and therefore recommends the bill be amended accordingly.

Section 507 also defines "employer" to include an association or group of employers. This provision is designed to reduce the cost of administering the program by permitting the Secretary to deal with an association or group rather than with its individual members. However, the committee believes an amendment is necessary in order to protect the United States in dealing with associations or groups which might later prove financially irresponsible. The amendment would limit the provision to associations or groups which the Secretary of Labor deems financially responsible, or whose individual members are liable for the obligations of the association or group in the event of default by such association or group. The amendment would not require the Secretary to enter into individual contracts with member-employers of any association or group so long as its form of organization or its arrangement with its members is such that its members are liable on its obligations.

The bill is amended to provide in section 508 that nothing in the act shall be construed to limit the authority of the Attorney General to permit the importation of workers from any other country for agricultural employment, pursuant to the immigration laws, or to

permit any such alien who entered the United States legally to remain for employment on farms.

Section 509 provides that the program of importing foreign agricultural workers, as authorized by the act, shall terminate December 31, 1952.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In considering this legislation, your committee has endeavored to work out a program which will make available an adequate supply of agricultural workers from Mexico as expeditiously as possible. At the same time, your committee has attempted to keep the cost to the Federal Government at a minimum. Under the program contemplated by S. 984 the Federal Government will assume financial responsibility for, first, costs of recruitment of workers in Mexico and transportation to reception centers within the United States exceeding $20 per worker; second, establishment and maintenance of reception centers in the United States; third, cost of apprehending contract violators; and, fourth, guaranteeing compliance by employers with the individual work contract with respect to payment of wages and furnishing of transportation.

It is expected that recruitment of Mexican farm laborers by a governmental agency, payment of their transportation to a reception center within the United States and return, and furnishing of subsistence during that time will not cost much more than $20 per worker. The Department of Labor has estimated that such cost might average nearly $35 per worker, but its estimates were based upon the recruitment of workers on the average as far as 500 miles south of the Mexico-United States border. It is hoped that adequate workers can be recruited closer to the border and if so, such costs to the Government will be less than those contained in the estimate. It must be kept in mind that the average cost up to $20 will be paid by the employer, and only where the average cost is more than $20 will the Federal Government pay for transportation and subsistence.

No estimate has been made by the Department of Labor as to the probable cost of establishing and maintaining reception centers in the United States by the Federal Government. However, in the agreement reached in Mexico City, the Mexican Government agreed to establish migratory stations in Mexico at its expense, and it appears fair and reasonable to your committee that the United States Government should bear its share of the program to the extent of establishing the necessary reception centers in the United States near the border. It was recommended by various witnesses in the hearings conducted on the legislation that several reception centers be established throughout the country. As the committee is reporting a bill which would make the employer pay practically all of the cost of importing workers from Mexico, your committee has agreed to authorize the establishment of only those stations absolutely required to furnish the necessary facilities at or near the border. Thus it will be possible to keep reception center costs at a minimum.

The expenses incurred in apprehending contract violators are not expected to add materially to the cost of the program. It is the intent of the legislation that such apprehension will be carried out by the presently constituted authorities in connection with their regular

duties, and in the case of workers not apprehended there should be no cost involved.

Finally, the bill authorizes the Federal Government to assume responsibility for compliance of employers with the individual work contract, with respect to the payment of wages and the furnishing of transportation. However, the bill further provides that the employer must agree to reimburse the Federal Government for any losses incurred by it by reason of its guaranty of employers' contracts. Thus, the contingent liability of the United States in this respect should not result in much loss to the Government.

The United States as well as Mexico must do everything possible to solve the wetback problem presented by great numbers of Mexicans entering the United States illegally every year. Both Governments agreed at the conference in Mexico City to intensify their efforts to control these violations of immigration laws. The program authorized by S. 984 whereby a governmental agency will recruit workers in Mexico in cooperation with officials of the Mexican Government is expected to provide a supply of workers for agricultural employment in compliance with the laws of both countries. While the program does not attempt to cover all phases of the wetback problem, it is expected to be helpful in alleviating the situation.

It is the opinion of the committee that the bill, as amended, will protect the financial interests of the United States and will provide an effective program of importing needed agricultural workers from Mexico. On the other hand, failure to enact legislation authorizing the United States Government to carry out its part of the agreement reached at Mexico City will mean the termination of the present international agreement and importation program as of June 30. Therefore, your committee recommends early enactment of S. 984, as amended.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with subsection (4) of rule XXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 1949, AS AMENDED

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TITLE V—AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

SEC. 501. For the purpose of assisting in such production of agricultural commodities and products as the Secretary of Agriculture deems necessary, by supplying agricultural workers from the Republic of Mexico (pursuant to arrangements between he United States and the Republic of Mexico), the Secretary of Labor is authorized—

(1) to recruit such workers (including any such workers temporarily in the United States under legal entry);

(2) to establish and operate reception centers at or near the places of actual entry of such workers into the continental United States for the purpose of receiving and housing such workers while arrangements are being made for their employment in, or departure from, the continental United States;

(3) to provide transportation for such workers from recruitment centers outside the continental United States to such reception centers and transportation from such reception centers to such recruitment centers after termination of employment;

(4) to provide such workers with such subsistence, emergency medical care, and burial expenses (not exceeding $150 burial expenses in any one case) as may

be or become necessary during transportation authorized by paragraph (3) and while such workers are at reception centers;

(5) to assist such workers and employers in negotiating contracts for agricultural employment (such workers being free to accept or decline agricultural employment with any eligible employer and to choose the type of agricultural employment they desire, and eligible employers being free to offer agricultural employment to any workers of their choice not under contract to other employers);

(6) to guarantee the performance by employers of provisions of such contracts relating to the payment of wages or the furnishing of transportation.

SEC. 502. No workers shall be made available under this title to any employer unless such employer enters into an agreement with the United States—

(1) to indemnify the United States against loss by reason of its guaranty of such employer's contracts;

(2) to reimburse the United States for essential expenses, not including salaries or expenses of regular department or agency personnel, incurred by it for the transportation and subsistence of workers under this title in amounts not to exceed $20 per worker; and

(3) to pay to the United States, in any case in which a worker is not returned to the reception center in accordance with the contract entered into under section 501 (5) and is apprehended within the United States, an amount determined by the Secretary of Labor to be equivalent to the normal cost to the employer of returning other workers from the place of employment to such reception center, less any portion thereof required to be paid by other employers.

SEC. 503. No workers recruited under this title shall be available for employmen in any area unless the Director of State Employment Security for such area has determined and certified that (1) sufficient domestic workers who are able, willing, and qualified are not available at the time and place needed to perform the work for which such workers are to be employed, and (2) the employment of such workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of domestic agricultural workers similarly employed.

SEC. 504. Workers recruited under this title who are not citizens of the United States shall be admitted to the United States subject to the immigration laws (or if already in, and otherwise eligible for admission to, the United States may, pursuant to arrangements between the United States and the Republic of Mexico, be permitted to remain therein) for such time and under such conditions as may be specified by the Attorney General but, notwithstanding any other provision of law or regulation, no penalty bond shall be required which imposes liability upon any person for the failure of any such worker to depart from the United States upon termination of employment.

SEC. 505. (a) Section 210 (a) (1) of the Social Security Act, as amended, is amended by adding at the end thereof a new subparagraph as follows:

"(C) Service performed by foreign agricultural workers under contracts entered into in accordance with title V of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended."

(b) Section 1426 (b) (1) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, is amended by adding at the end thereof a new subparagraph as follows:

"(C) Service performed by foreign agricultural workers under contracts entered into in accordance with title V of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended."

(c) Workers recruited under the provisions of this title shall not be subject to the head tax levied under section 2 of the Immigration Act of 1917, (8 U. S. C., sec. 132).

SEC. 506. For the purposes of this title, the Secretary of Labor is authorized—

(1) to enter into agreements with Federal and State agencies; to utilize (pursuant to such agreements) the facilities and services of such agencies; and to allocate or transfer funds or otherwise to pay or reimburse such agencies for expenses in connection therewith;

(2) to accept and utilize voluntary and uncompensated services; and

(3) when necessary to supplement the domestic agricultural labor force, to cooperate with the Secretary of State in negotiating and carrying out agreements or arrangements relating to the employment in the United States, subject to the immigration laws, of agricultural workers from the Republic of Mexico.

SEC. 507. For the purposes of this title—

(1) The term "agricultural employment" includes services or activities included within the provisions of section 3 (f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, or section 1426 (h) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

(2) The term "employer" shall include an association, or other group, of employers, but only if (A) those of its members for whom workers are being obtained are bound, in the event of its default, to carry out the obligations undertaken by it pursuant to section

502, or (B) the Secretary determines that such individual liability is not necessary to assure performance of such obligations.

SEC. 508. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as limiting the authority of the Attorney General, pursuant to the general immigration laws, to permit the importation of aliens of any nationality for agricultural employment as defined in section 507, or to permit any such alien who entered the United States legally to remain for the purpose of engaging in such agricultural employment under such conditions and for such time as he, the Attorney General, shall specify.

SEC. 509. No workers shall be made available under this title for employment after December 31, 1952.

SOCIAL SECURITY ACT, AS AMENDED

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SEC. 210. For the purposes of this title—

Employment

(a) The term "employment" means any service performed after 1936 and prior to 1951 which was employment for the purposes of this title under the law applicable to the period in which such service was performed, and any service, of whatever nature, performed after 1950 either (A) by an employee for the person employing him, irrespective of the citizenship or residence of either, (i) within the United States, or (ii) on or in connection with an American vessel or American aircraft under a contract of service which is entered into within the United States or during the performance of which and while the employee is employed on the vessel or aircraft it touches at a port in the United States, if the employee is employed on and in connection with such vessel or aircraft when outside the United States, or (B) outside the United States by a citizen of the United States as an employee for an American employer (as defined in subsection (e)); except that, in the case of service performed after 1950, such term shall not include—

(1) (A) Agricultural labor (as defined in subsection (f) of this section) performed in any calendar quarter by an employee, unless the cash remuneration paid for such labor (other than service described in subparagraph (B)) is $50 or more and such labor is performed for an employer by an individual who is regularly employed by such employer to perform such agricultural labor. For the purposes of this subparagraph, an individual shall be deemed to be regularly employed by an employer during a calendar quarter only if—

(i) such individual performs agricultural labor (other than service described in subparagraph (B)) for such employer on a full-time basis on sixty days during such quarter, and

(ii) the quarter was immediately preceded by a qualifying quarter.

For the purposes of the preceding sentence, the term "qualifying quarter" means (I) any quarter during all of which such individual was continuously employed by such employer, or (II) any subsequent quarter which meets the test of clause (i) if, after the last quarter during all of which such individual was continuously employed by such employer, each intervening quarter met the test of clause (i). Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subparagraph, an individual shall also be deemed to be regularly employed by an employer during a calendar quarter if such individual was regularly employed (upon application of clauses (i) and (ii)), by such employer during the preceding calendar quarter.

(B) Service performed in connection with the production or harvesting of any commodity defined as an agricultural commodity in section 15 (g) of the Agricultural Marketing Act, as amended, or in connection with the ginning of cotton;

(C) Service performed by foreign agricultural workers under contracts entered into in accordance with title V of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended.

INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, AS AMENDED

SEC. 1426 * * *

(b) EMPLOYMENT.—The term "employment" means any service performed after 1936 and prior to 1951 which was employment for the purposes of this subchapter under the law applicable to the period in which such service was performed, and any service, of whatever nature, performed after 1950 either (A) by an employee for the person employing him, irrespective of the citizenship or residence of either, (i) within the United States, or (ii) on or in connection with an American vessel or American aircraft under a contract of service which is entered into within the United States or during the performance of which and while

the employee is employed on the vessel or aircraft it touches at a port in the United States, if the employee is employed on and in connection with such vessel or aircraft when outside the United States, or (B) outside the United States by a citizen of the United States as an employee for an American employer (as defined in subsection (i) of this section); except that, in the case of service performed after 1950, such term shall not include—

(1) (A) Agricultural labor (as defined in subsection (h) of this section) performed in any calendar quarter by an employee, unless the cash remuneration paid for such labor (other than service described in subparagraph (B)) is $50 or more and such labor is performed for an employer by an individual who is regularly employed by such employer to perform such agricultural labor. For the purposes of this subparagraph, an individual shall be deemed to be regularly employed by an employer during a calendar quarter only if—

(i) such individual performs agricultural labor (other than service described in subparagraph (B)) for such employer on a full-time basis on sixty days during such quarter, and

(ii) the quarter was immediately preceded by a qualifying quarter.

For the purposes of the preceding sentence, the term "qualifying quarter" means (I) any quarter during all of which such individual was continuously employed by such employer, or (II) any subsequent quarter which meets the test of clause (i) if, after the last quarter during all of which such individual was continuously employed by such employer, each intervening quarter met the test of clause (i). Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subparagraph, an individual shall also be deemed to be regularly employed by an employer during a calendar quarter if such individual was regularly employed (upon application of clauses (i) and (ii)) by such employer during the preceding calendar quarter.

(B) Service performed in connection with the production or harvesting of any commodity defined as an agricultural commodity in section 15 (g) of the Agricultural Marketing Act, as amended, or in connection with the ginning of cotton;

(C) Service performed by foreign agricultural workers under contracts entered into in accordance with title V of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended.

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82D CONGRESS, 1st Session } SENATE { REPT. 214, Part 2

IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

APRIL 25 (legislative day, APRIL 17), 1951.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HUMPHREY, from the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, submitted the following

MINORITY VIEWS

[To accompany S. 984]

This bill, S. 984, was favorably reported by the committee, after hearings, but before the issuance of the report of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor on April 7, 1951.

The President's Commission was created in June 1950 to inquire, among other matters, into:

(*a*) social, economic, health and educational conditions among migratory workers, both alien and domestic, in the United States;

(*b*) problems created by the migration of workers, for temporary employment, into the United States, pursuant to the immigration laws or otherwise;

(*c*) whether sufficient numbers of local and migratory workers can be obtained from domestic sources to meet agricultural labor needs and, if not, the extent to which the temporary employment of foreign workers may be required to supplement the domestic labor supply.

The Commission held 12 public hearings in Brownsville, Tex.; El Paso, Tex.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Portland, Oreg.; Fort Collins, Colo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Saginaw, Mich.; Trenton, N. J.; West Palm Beach, Fla.; and two in Washington, D. C. The hearings comprised 26 volumes available to the public. The published report of the Commission comes to 188 pages.

The findings of the Commission bear directly upon the legislation under consideration.

There is no doubt but that it would be far preferable had the members of the committee and the Senate had opportunity to study the report of the Commission before voting and considering this bill.

The reason given for proceeding on this bill at this time is the urgency to enact legislation to enable importation of Mexican agricultural workers beyond June 31, 1951.

The minority, after considering this bill in the light of the Commission's report, believes that the problem of migratory labor is an interrelated one, and affects workers within the United States and

in other countries as well. It should be studied in its broad ramifications and comprehensively rather than by piecemeal legislation such as this. The Committee on Labor and Public Welfare through its Subcommittee on Labor and Labor-Management Relations, and in accordance with the Legislative Reorganization Act, has now begun such a study with a view to legislation. The interests of the United States and of American workers would be best protected were the Congress to approach the problem of migratory labor in such a perspective. We would far prefer, therefore, to have this bill delayed until the Congress is prepared to consider and enact comprehensive manpower legislation.

Within the limits of S. 984 and its limited objectives, the minority, in the light of the Commission report, has certain modifications and amendments to present which are presented here in topical form.

The fundamental legislative assumption behind this bill is that an agricultural labor shortage exists which requires the immediate importation of foreign labor for its relief. The majority in describing the background of the legislation under consideration observes that—

> Throughout World War II and since the termination of hostilities, it has been necessary to import agricultural workers from foreign countries in order to assist in the production of adequate supplies of food and fiber for domestic consumption in the United States and for export.

The report of the President's Commission bears this out, but the startling finding of the Commission in this matter is—

> From 1945 through 1948, we employed a continuously larger hired labor force even though our work requirement (total man-hours) was gradually declining. In other words, we have been using more workers to achieve the same or slightly less work, and have thereby been reducing the work contribution per worker. This fact is strikingly reflected in the amount of employment received per hired farm worker:

	Days of farm work per farm worker
1946	113
1947	106
1948	104
1949	90

The Commission comments, "The migratory worker gets so little work that for him, employment is only incidental to unemployment."

It is the view of the President's Commission that the human resource in agriculture is used extravagantly. However, the Commission recognizes that more efficient utilization of agricultural labor will take time, that it cannot be expected to occur in a few weeks or months. Accordingly, it make divergent recommendations with respect to the importation of foreign workers, one recommendation for the short-run and one recommendation for the long-run. For 1951, it recommends that "No special measures be adopted to increase the number of alien contract laborers beyond the number admitted in 1950." For the long-run it recommends that "Future efforts be directed toward supplying agricultural labor needs with our own workers and eliminating dependence on foreign labor."

The finding of the President's Commission with respect to the underutilization of agricultural manpower corroborates the research of the staff of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report which published its findings in a joint committee print, Underemployment of Rural Families, February 2, 1951. The staff of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report was concerned with farm workers as a whole

rather than primarily migrant workers. Through analysis of five groups of low-income farm workers it reached the conclusion:

> If the workers in these five groups of rural families could be employed at jobs where they would produce as much as the average worker on the medium-sized commercial family farm or the average rural nonfarm worker, the production and output of rural people would be increased 20 to 25 percent. This is the equivalent of adding 2,500,000 workers to the total labor force.

If there is any justification to the bill, therefore, it is to meet an immediate, temporary need. Considered in the restricted terms in which its sponsor put forward the bill, certain further changes may be made in S. 984 to incorporate certain of the findings of the President's Commission. It is believed that proposed changes might usefully be considered against four broad criteria:

(1) That the Mexican importation program be carried out in such a manner as to minimize detriment to American workers.

(2) That devices be strengthened for assuring that both parties to the individual work contract—employer and employee—will live up to their agreements.

(3) That more effective measures be taken to meet the wetback problem.

(4) That the cost to the public of the Mexican importation program be kept to a minimum.

With respect to the first proposition, certain further changes in S. 984 suggest themselves. Section 503 of the committee bill provides that foreign workers may be made available where the Director of State Employment Security for the area of use has determined and certified that willing, able and qualified domestic workers are not available for employment at the time and place needed.

In substituting the director of State employment for the United States Secretary of Labor, S. 984 makes an abrupt departure from past immigration policy. Under section 3 of the 1917 immigration law, contract laborers are not admissible to the United States except under discretionary powers granted the Commissioner General of Immigration with the approval of the Secretary of Labor. In our view, it would be a step backward to change this and to call for certification by the State director of employment. In our American economy we have a national market. This is true of labor in the same way it is true of automobiles and radios. To propose State determination labor shortage is the same as to propose State autonomy in tariff matters. A labor shortage must be determined from a national perspective.

In order that all interested groups may have the opportunity of effectively expressing their views as to the need for foreign workers, it is proposed that the Secretary of Labor hold public hearings in areas of alleged labor shortage. In this way he may receive the advice of all interested parties.

Inasmuch as a labor supply is necessarily determined in terms of the attractiveness or unattractiveness of the employment offer, it is clearly impossible to know whether or not a shortage of domestic workers exists until domestic workers have been offered the terms and conditions of employment extended to foreign workers. It might at first be thought that domestic workers customarily were offered terms and conditions of employment comparable to those offered foreign

and offshore workers. The finding of the President's Commission in this matter is quite the opposite. The Commission observes:

> * * * employers, *as a rule*, refuse to extend to * * * [domestic migratory workers] the guaranties they give to alien workers whom they import under contract. These include guaranties of employment, workmen's compensation, medical care, standards of sanitation, and payment of the cost of transportation. [Emphasis added.]

We believe further protection should be given domestic workers under the Mexican importation program by adding the requirement, before certifying the need for foreign workers, that reasonable efforts will have been made to secure American workers for the employment. This further emphasizes the important role of the Farm Placement Service of the United States Employment Service in assisting workers to find employment.

S. 984 exempts workers brought in under its provisions from the Federal old-age and survivors insurance provisions of the Social Security Act.

The bill amends the Internal Revenue Code so as to exclude the service performed by such workers from the contribution provisions of the law as well as from the benefit provisions of the insurance program under the Social Security Act. Both the employer and the employee are exempted from the social-security tax.

Under the amendments to the Social Security Act, enacted by the Congress in 1950, a limited group of "regularly employed" agricultural workers were brought in under the insurance provisions effective January 1, 1951. In order for an agricultural worker and his employer to become subject to the insurance contributions, an individual must work for one employer for at least 60 days each out of two consecutive quarters, before any of his agricultural work becomes subject to the contribution provisions of the insurance program. In most cases, it will be necessary for an individual to work 6 ot 8 months for one agricultural employer before any of his agricultural work will be subject to contributions under the insurance program. Due to the relatively short period of time that Mexican contract workers work for a single employer, very few of them will meet the stringent requirements of the new law and consequently very few of them and their employers will be subject to the social-security contributions. It is estimated that not more than 3,000 to 5,000 Mexican workers would become subject to the social-security provisions under the terms of the proposed program and, of course, if all of the Mexican agricultural labor brought into this country return to Mexico within about 5 or 6 months, there would be none of the Mexican nationals who would become subject to the contribution provisions of the insurance program.

But it is still true that the exclusion of Mexican workers from the insurance program could result in the hiring of such workers in preference to American workers since their employers would have the competitive advantage of not paying social-security contributions and it appears to be undesirable to give employers, as a matter of general congressional policy, a financial incentive to hiring foreign labor as against hiring domestic labor.

The major issue, therefore, that is raised by the provision exempting Mexican nationals from the social-security provisions of the law is a matter of fundamental principle and national policy. Since its enactment in 1935, the insurance program under the Social Security Act

has covered individuals in specific types of jobs in the United States without regard to the nationality of the individual. It should be noted that social-insurance systems in a number of foreign countries, including Mexico, do not discriminate against American nationals performing services in covered employment. This principle of nondiscrimination as between the United States nationals and the nationals of other countries has been advocated and endorsed by the International Labor Organization, by numerous representatives of social-security institutions of various countries, and by the Inter-American Committee on Social Security. A change in this policy which would establish the principle of exclusion because of nationality may eventually result in more harm than good because of the possibility of criticism arising against the United States for discrimination in the application of its social laws. Such criticism would not be in the long-run interest of the United States in world affairs.

One of the reasons given for supporting the exemption in the proposed bill is that the employee should not be required to pay the payroll tax if he is not going to become eligible for any social-security benefits. This difficulty can be overcome by the employer paying the employee contribution as well as his own, without deducting the employee contribution from the employee's wages. This policy is permitted under the present law.

It should be pointed out that that many Mexican nationals are already covered under the insurance program and will continue to be covered under the insurance program in the future. Mexican nationals who come to the United States for employment and work in jobs covered under the insurance system have been covered under the program since it first began in 1937. Many Mexican nationals employed in the manufacturing industry, canning, service trades, and domestic service are now contributing to the insurance system. The exemption of one group of Mexican workers while retaining coverage for other groups of Mexican workers would introduce undesirable discrimination. If the employment is rendered within the United States, the present law provides for contributions being paid on such service and benefits being paid to Mexican nationals and their families even though they may be residing in Mexico. At the present time, the Social Security Administration is making payments to Mexican nationals residing in Mexico based upon the employment contributions made for service under the law.

If, despite these various considerations, the Congress is of the opinion that some special arrangements should be made on behalf of Mexican nationals brought into the United States for short-term employment, it is suggested that consideration be given to the desirability of transferring the contributions made on behalf of the Mexican contract workers to the Mexican Social Insurance Institute. Such an arrangement would be consistent with a sound policy of international cooperation of nondiscrimination of nationals to other countries and eliminate any contention of giving an incentive to employment of foreign nationals to the detriment of domestic labor.

Before embarking upon a policy which may have far-reaching implications and adverse effects upon the insurance program and upon our foreign policy, it is recommended that the exemption provision in the bill be deleted pending the final determination of a long-run policy in keeping with the principles upon which our social insurance program has been based in the past.

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law or regulation" S. 984 exempts employers of Mexican workers from posting bond to guarantee departure of these workers. It is understandable how the committee recommended this step. It received much testimony on the expense and the frequent unfairness to employers of the bond requirement. Employers testified before the committee that under the existing provision of the law they were required to post bond to guarantee departure of the worker, yet they did not have it within their power to hold the worker to employment. If the worker took it in mind to walk off some night, there was no way that they could stop him.

Important as this factor is in determining policy on this question, certain other considerations need to be taken into account. While it is true that the employer does not have the power to compel the worker to remain in his employment, the President's Commission found that there tended to be correlation over a period of years in the rate of desertions from employers. The Commission found that—

> Desertions from individual contracting employers range from as low as 4 percent to as high as 50 percent. Moreover, it is noted that there is a tendency for those employers having a high desertion rate in 1 year also to have a high desertion rate the next. We interpret this to mean that desertions from contract vary with individual management and working conditions. Where these are good, the desertions are low.

While such correlation could not be taken to explain each individual desertion, the evidence of continuing high desertion rates from some employers and continuing low desertion rates from other employers is so striking, that a relationship between desertion and working conditions would seem inescapable. Accordingly, we are of the view that while it is appropriate to recognize that no employer has it wholly within his power to guarantee contract workers remaining in employment, that he does, however, have a measure of control in this respect.

In discussion of the Mexican contract, it is useful briefly to note practice with respect to the bond requirement for other foreign workers and for Mexican workers in earlier years. On this point, the President's Commission observes:

> These bonds, for British West Indians, have been as high as $500 per head. For Mexicans, the bond is now $25 per head. For Bahamians, it is $50; for Jamaicans, $100. In 1950, the bond for Mexicans was set at $50, but under pressure from employers, the amount was reduced to $25.

If the bond provision for Mexican workers were altogether removed, the present inequity in the differing sizes of these bond requirements would be further heightened.

Before considering abandonment of the bond requirement, it is appropriate to examine the thinking which led to the enactment of the provision originally. The 1917 immigration law was concerned with protecting the standards and conditions of work for American workers from the competition of cheaper immigrant labor. It, therefore, flatly prohibited admission of contract labor, but to provide for unusual or emergency situations granted discretionary authority to the Commissioner General of Immigration with the approval of the Secretary of Labor for temporary admission of such labor. In order to regulate and control the temporary admission of otherwise inadmissible aliens, the act called for the exaction of bonds. Inasmuch as we are today still vitally concerned with the protection of the standards for American workers, we believe that when exception is made and

emergency importation of contract labor permitted that it should be accompanied by regulatory and controlling devices. We are, therefore, convinced that it would be unwise to abandon this protection to American workers.

In order to assure effective and satisfactory contract operations, it is fundamental that both parties to a contract live up to the obligations assumed. One of the complaints of the Government of Mexico has been the unsatisfactoriness of measures taken in the past to assure that United States employers will live up to the terms of the individual work contract. Accordingly, it will be noted that S. 984 provides that the United States Government guarantee "performance by employers of provisions of such contracts relating to the payment of wages or the furnishing of transportation." We are of the view that this provision should be broadened to include other payments due under such contracts. Similarly, it is felt appropriate to ask the Government of Mexico to take such measures as it deems appropriate to assure that workers coming to the United States under this program, will honor their obligations under the contract.

In order to assure more satisfactory performance on the part of both parties to the individual work contracts, we believe that the grievance machinery should be materially strengthened. The President's Commission found that—

> The lack of an appropriate way of resolving employer-worker differences is one of the main reasons for a large proportion of Mexican nationals returning home before the completion of their contracts or simply deserting or "skipping" their contracts.

Existing conciliation machinery is not adequate. The President's Commission observes:

> Complaints alleging violation of the individual work contract may be initiated in three ways: Officially by the United States Employment Service or privately by either worker or employer. If an officially initiated complaint is not adjusted, the Mexican consulate is called in for a joint investigation. Complaints from workers may be received by the United States Employment Service or submitted through the appropriate Mexican consulate. Complaints by employers are received by the United States Employment Service. On all types of complaints the Mexican consulate may be called in for joint investigation and determination.
>
> As a matter of practice, we find that while employers may refer some complaints to the United States Employment Service, workers' complaints are ordinarily referred initially to the Mexican consulate. Let it be borne in mind that this conciliation procedure is contained in the international agreement (in English, which the typical Mexican worker cannot read) but is incorporated only by reference in the individual work contract (where the Spanish-reading Mexican worker finds out in Spanish that there is a conciliation procedure available to him if he could read English).

In 1950, the United States Employment Service had nine inspectors detailed to handle grievances under the Mexican program. This number has recently been increased to 15, but this still seems altogether inadequate. We again quote the report of the President's Commission:

> For the farm employer or association of farm employers, the conciliation provision may be somewhat more adequate than it is for the foreign workers with a language handicap in a strange land. To expect the Mexican contract worker to locate one of the nine United States Employment Service inspectors or to relay his complaint to them through the State employment service is to expect more than is within his capability. Consequently, if he can get in touch with the Mexican consulate, that is about the best he can do. This cumbersome and complicated procedure, involving several Government agencies in general and none in particular, encourages desertion in place of making a complaint because every complaint has the potentiality of being lost or ignored.

Accordingly, we recommend that the United States Employment Service expand its conciliation service.

We believe that S. 984 does not go far enough in meeting the serious social, economic, and security problem represented by the influx of hundreds of thousands of wetbacks over our southern border. The committee comments on "the great economic and social problems" which the wetbacks represent.

The concern of the committee with the wetback problem is fully shared by the President's Commission. The one difference between the two groups could be said to relate to the estimate concerning the magnitude of the recent "invasion," which the committee puts at 1,000,000. The President's Commission is more conservative in its estimate of the number of wetbacks. The Commission uses the figure of half a million.

The committee explicitly comments on the inadequacy of present measures to deal with the wetback problem. Its concern is reflected in the important amendment to section 501 of the bill prohibiting recruitment of wetbacks. Possibly through oversight, the comparable amendment to section 504 has not been made, so that as the bill currently stands it is inconsistent on this vital point. It is accordingly proposed that 504 be amended in the manner of 501. The term "vital" is used deliberately, for it is the view of the President's Commission that one of the most important factors in the recent acceleration of the wetback traffic is the legalization of illegals. It comments:

> The latest and probably worst stage in this erosion of immigration law was when, under the authority of the ninth proviso, Mexican wetbacks were legalized and placed under contract. The ninth proviso allows the temporary admission and return of otherwise inadmissible aliens—under rules and conditions. * * * In the contracting of wetbacks, we see the abandonment of the concept that the ninth proviso authority is limited to admission. A wetback is not admitted; he is already here, unlawfully. We have thus reached a point where we place a premium upon violation of the immigration law.

Prohibition of the legalization of workers illegally in the United States, while most important to the solution of the wetback problem, is not enough to meet the dimensions of the current "invasion." The President's Commission suggests other valuable steps which may be taken. It recommends that legislation be enacted making it unlawful to employ aliens illegally in the United States. It recommends that the Immigration and Naturalization Service be given clear statutory authority to enter places of employment to determine if illegal aliens are employed. We are of the view that these recommendations of the President's Commission are of utmost importance.

The fourth criterion which we proposed as guide to the measures to be included in a Mexican importation program, is that the cost of the program to the public be kept to a minimum. We view as unrealistic the figure of $20 to cover the round-trip cost of transportation of workers between recruitment centers in Mexico and reception centers in the United States as well as their subsistence during this period. In this connection, it is pertinent to bear in mind that it would be highly unusual if workers were hired by United States employers directly upon their arrival at the reception centers. Therefore, subsistence needs to be considered not only during the period of travel but for the period that they spend at the reception center awaiting employment.

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Recommendations of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor

I. FEDERAL COMMITTEE ON MIGRATORY FARM LABOR

We recommend that:

(1) There be established a Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor, to be appointed by and responsible to the President.

(2) The Committee be composed of three public members and one member from each of the following agencies:

Department of Agriculture,
Department of Labor,
Department of State,
Immigration and Naturalization Service, and
Federal Security Agency.

(3) The public members be appointed by the President. One public member should serve full time as chairman and the other two on a part-time basis. The Government representatives should be appointed by the President on the nomination of the heads of the respective agencies. The Committee should have authority, within the limits of its appropriation, to establish such advisory committees as it deems necessary.

(4) The Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor have the authority and responsibility, with adequate staff and funds to assist, coordinate, and stimulate the various agencies of the Government in their activities and policies relating to migratory farm labor, including such investigations and publications as will contribute to an understanding of migratory farm-labor problems, and to recommend to the President, from time to time, such changes in administration and legislation as may be required to facilitate improvements in the policies of the Government relating to migratory farm labor. The Committee should undertake such specific responsibilities as are assigned to it in the recommendations set forth in this report and as may be assigned to it by the President.

In general, however, the Committee should have no administrative or operating responsibilities; these should remain within the respective established agencies and departments.

(5) Similar agencies be established in the various States. The responsibilities and the activities of the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor and those of the agencies established in the States should be complementary and not competitive. The State agencies should be encouraged to carry forward those programs in behalf of migratory farm workers which, by their nature, fall within the responsibility of individual States. The Federal Committee will have major concern with interstate, national, and international activities. But at all times there should be close consultation between the Federal and State agencies and a two-way flow of information, suggestions, and effective cooperation.

II. MIGRATORY FARM LABOR IN EMERGENCY

Our investigations of the present farm labor problem and our analysis of this country's experience during the years of World War II and since, point to certain conclusions which to us seem inescapable in the present emergency. We therefore recommend that:

(1) First reliance be placed on using our domestic labor force more effectively.

(2) No special measures be adopted to increase the number of alien contract laborers beyond the number admitted in 1950.

(3) To meet any supplemental needs for agricultural labor that may develop, preference be given to citizens of the offshore possessions of the United States, such as Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

(4) Future efforts be directed toward supplying agricultural labor needs with our own workers and eliminating dependence on foreign labor.

III. ALIEN CONTRACT LABOR IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

We recommend that—

(1) Foreign labor importation and contracting be under the terms of intergovernmental agreements which should clearly state the conditions and standards of employment under which the foreign workers are to be employed. These should be substantially the same for all countries. No employer, employer's representative or association of employers, or labor contractor should be permitted to contract directly with foreign workers for employment in the United States. This is not intended to preclude employer participation in the selection of qualified workers when all other requirements of legal importation are fulfilled.

(2) The United States-Mexican intergovernmental agreement be in terms that will promote immigration law enforcement. The Department of State should negotiate with the Government of Mexico such a workable international agreement as will assure its operation as the exclusive channel for the importation of Mexican nationals under contract, free from the competition of illegal migration.

(3) Administration of foreign labor recruiting, contracting, transporting, and agreements be made the direct responsibility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This should be the principal contracting agency, and private employers should secure their foreign workers exclusively from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

(4) The Farm Placement Service of the United States Employment Service certify to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and to the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor when and if labor requirements cannot be filled from domestic sources and the numbers of additional workers needed. On alien contract labor, the United States Employment Service and the various State employment services should be advised by the tripartite advisory council provided for in the Wagner-Peyser Act, or by tripartite subcommittees of the council. However, no certification of shortage of domestic labor should be made unless and until continental domestic labor has been offered the same terms and conditions of employment as are offered to foreign workers. After certifying the need for foreign workers, the United States Employment Service should have no administrative responsibilities in connection with any foreign labor program.

(5) In accordance with the policies of the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor, the Immigration and Naturalization Service arrange, subject to the terms of the intergovernmental agreements then in force, for the importation of the number of qualified foreign agricultural workers certified as needed by the United States Employment Service, and transport them to appropriate reception and contracting centers in the United States.

(6) The Immigration and Naturalization Service deliver the imported workers to the farm employers who have submitted the necessary applications and bonds, and who have signed individual work agreements. Employment should be under the general supervision of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. An adequate procedure for investigating and resolving complaints and disputes originating from either party should be negotiated in the international agreements and should be incorporated in the standard work contracts. The Immigration and Naturalization Service should be authorized to terminate any contract of employment and remove the workers, and to refuse to furnish foreign workers to any employer or association of employers when there has been repeated or willful violation of previous agreements, or where there is reasonable doubt that the terms of the current agreement are being observed. The Immigration and Naturalization Service should, in the discharge of its obligations, receive such assistance from the United States Employment Service as it may request.

(7) Puerto Rico and Hawaii, as possessions of the United States, be recognized as part of the domestic labor supply, and workers from these Territories be accorded preference over foreign labor in such employment as they are willing and suited to fill.

(8) Where a government-to-government agreement provides for the payment of the prevailing wage to foreign contract workers, this wage be ascertained by public authority after a hearing. The policies, procedures, and responsibilities involved should be determined by the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor.

IV. THE WETBACK INVASION—ILLEGAL ALIEN LABOR IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

We recommend that—

(1) The Immigration and Naturalization Service be strengthened by (*a*) clear statutory authority to enter places of employment to determine if illegal aliens are employed, (*b*) clear statutory penalties for harboring, concealing, or transporting illegal aliens, and (*c*) increased appropriations for personnel and equipment.

(2) Legislation be enacted making it unlawful to employ aliens illegally in the United States, the sanctions to be (*a*) removal by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of all legally imported labor from any place of employment on which any illegal alien is found employed; (*b*) fine and imprisonment; (*c*) restraining orders and injunctions; and (*d*) prohibiting the shipment in interstate commerce of any product on which illegal alien labor has worked.

(3) Legalization for employment purposes of aliens illegally in the United States be discontinued and forbidden. This is not intended to interfere with handling of hardship cases as authorized by present immigration laws.

(4) The Department of State seek the active cooperation of the Government of Mexico in a program for eliminating the illegal migration of Mexican workers into the United States by (*a*) the strict enforcement of the Mexican emigration laws, (*b*) preventing the concentration, in areas close to the border, of surplus supplies of Mexican labor, and (*c*) refraining from attempts to obtain legalization for employment in the United States of Mexican workers illegally in this country.

V. HOW MIGRATORY WORKERS FIND EMPLOYMENT

We recommend that:

(1) Federal legislation be enacted to prohibit interstate recruitment of farm labor by crew leaders, labor contractors, employers, employers' agents, and other private recruiting agents except when such agents are licensed by the Department of Labor. The Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor should develop appropriate standards for regulating and licensing such private agents.

(2) States enact legislation and establish enforcement machinery to regulate and license labor contractors, crew leaders, and other private recruiting agents operating intrastate, such legislation to include private solicitors or recruiters operating on a fee or nonfee basis, either part time or year round. The standards of regulation should at least equal those established by the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor. The recommendations of the Governor's Committee of California suggest the form and content of such State legislation.

(3) The United States Employment Service and the State employment services adopt a policy of refusing to refer workers to crew leaders, labor contractors, or private recruiting agents for employment.

(4) The United States Employment Service adopts regulations and administrative procedures to safeguard interstate recruiting and transporting of workers, by providing that—

(*a*) Terms of employment be reduced to writing, such written terms to contain a provision for the adjustment of grievances.

(*b*) Housing and transportion arrangements available to workers meet the minimum standards established by the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor.

(*c*) State employment services shall not recruit farm workers outside their States or assist in bringing farm workers in from other States unless the United States Employment Service is assured that the State does not have the necessary labor available within its own borders.

(5) Neither the United States Employment Service nor State employment services join with employers, employers' associations, or other private recruiting agents in mass advertising for interstate recruitment.

(6) In order to achieve better utilization of the national domestic farm-labor supply, States having legislation restricting recruitment of workers for out-of-State employment (emigrant agent laws) undertake repeal of such legislation.

(7) The Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor establish transportation standards of safety and comfort (including in-transit rest camps). States should be guided by the transportation standards of the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor as minimum conditions to govern intrastate transportation of migratory farm workers.

(8) The United States Employment Service and the State employment services be advised on farm-labor questions by the tripartite advisory councils as provided for in the Wagner-Peyser Act or by tripartite subcommittees of the councils.

VI. EMPLOYMENT MANAGEMENT AND LABOR RELATIONS

We recommend that:

(1) The Agricultural Extension Service, through its Federal office and in those States where migratory labor has significant proportions, make instruction in farm-labor management and labor relations available to farm employers and to farm employees. The Agricultural Extension Services should also make available advice and counsel for the organizing of farm-employer associations similar to those sponsored during World War II, which associations should have the purpose of pooling their joint labor needs to promote orderly recruiting, better employer-worker relations, and more continuous employment.

(2) The Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 be amended to extend coverage to employees on farms having a specified minimum employment.

VII. EMPLOYMENT, WAGES, AND INCOMES

We recommend that:

(1) The Congress enact minimum-wage legislation to cover farm laborers, including migratory laborers.

(2) State legislatures give serious consideration to the protection of agricultural workers, including migratory farm workers, by minimum-wage legislation.

(3) Federal and State unemployment compensation legislation be enacted to cover agricultural labor.

(4) Because present unemployment compensation legislation is not adapted to meeting the unemployment problems of most migratory farm workers, the Federal Social Security Act be amended to provide matching grants to States for general assistance on the condition that no needy person be denied assistance because of lack of legal residence status.

VIII. HOUSING

We recommend that:

(1) The United States Employment Service not recruit and refer out-of-State agricultural workers and the Immigration and Naturalization Service not import foreign workers (pursuant to certifications of labor shortage) unless and until:

(*a*) The State in which the workers are to be employed has established minimum housing standards for such workers together with a centralized agency for administration and enforcement of such minimum standards on the basis of periodic inspections. These State housing standards, in their terms and in administration, should not be less than the Federal standards hereinafter provided.

(*b*) The employer or association of employers has been certified as having available housing, which at recent inspection has been found to comply with minimum standards for housing then in force in that State.

(2) Federal minimum standards covering all types of on-job housing for migratory workers moving in interstate or foreign commerce be established and promulgated by the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor. These standards, administered through a State license system, should govern site, shelter, space, lighting, sanitation, cooking equipment, and other facilities relating to maintenance of health and decency.

(3) Any State employment service requesting aid of the United States Employment Service in procuring out-of-State workers submit, with such request, a statement that the housing being offered meets the Federal standards.

(4) The Agricultural Extension Service in those States using appreciable numbers of migratory workers undertake an educational program for growers concerning design, materials, and lay-out of housing for farm labor.

(5) The Department of Agriculture be empowered to extend grants-in-aid to States for labor camps in areas of large and sustained seasonal labor demand provided the States agree to construct and operate such camps under standards promulgated by the Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor. Since such projects are to be constructed and operated for the principal purpose of housing agricultural workers and their families, preference of occupancy should be given those engaged in seasonal agricultural work. Costs should be defrayed by charges to occupants.

(6) When housing is deficient in areas where there is large seasonal employment of migratory farm workers, but where the seasonal labor need is of short duration, the Department of Agriculture establish transit camp sites without individual housing. These camp sites should be equipped with water, sanitary facilities including showers, laundry, and cooking arrangements. They should be adequately supervised.

(7) The Department of Agriculture be authorized, and supplied with the necessary funds, to extend carefully supervised credit in modest amounts to assist migratory farm workers to acquire or to construct homes in areas where agriculture is in need of a considerable number of seasonal workers during the crop season.

(8) States be encouraged to enact State housing codes establishing minimum health and sanitation standards for housing in unincorporated areas.

(9) The Public Housing Administration of the Housing and Home Finance Agency develop a rural nonfarm housing program to include housing needs of migrants in their home-base situation.

IX. HEALTH, WELFARE, AND SAFETY

We recommend that:

(1) In amending the Social Security Act to provide matching grants to States for general assistance (as we recommend in chapter 7), provision be made to include medical care on a matching-grant basis for recipients of public assistance on the condition that no person be denied medical care because of the lack of legal residence status.

(2) The Public Health Service Act be amended to provide, under the supervision of the Surgeon General, matching grants to States, to conduct health programs among migratory farm laborers to deal particularly with such diseases as tuberculosis, venereal disease, diarrhea, enteritis, and dysentery, and to conduct health clinics for migratory farm workers.

(3) The United States Employment Service make no interstate referrals of migratory farm workers unless the representative of the State requesting the labor shall give evidence in writing that neither the State nor the counties concerned will deny medical care on the grounds of nonresidence, and that migratory workers will be admitted to local hospitals on essentially the same basis as residents of the local community.

(4) The Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor and the appropriate State agencies undertake studies looking toward the extension of safety and workmen's compensation legislation to farm workers.

(5) The Federal Social Security Act be amended to include migratory farm workers as well as other agricultural workers not now covered under the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program.

X. CHILD LABOR

We recommend that—

(1) The 1949 child-labor amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act be retained and vigorously enforced.

(2) The Fair Labor Standards Act be further amended to restrict the employment of children under 14 years of age on farms outside of school hours.

(3) State child-labor laws be brought to a level at least equal to the present Fair Labor Standards Act and made fully applicable to agriculture.

(4) The child-labor provisions of the Sugar Act be vigorously enforced.

XI. EDUCATION

We recommend that:

(1) The Federal Committee on Migratory Farm Labor, through the cooperation of public and private agencies, including the United States Office of Education, State educational agencies, the National Education Association, universities, and the American Council on Education, develop a plan which will provide an adequate program of education for migratory workers and their children. This may include Federal grants-in-aid to the States.

(2) The Agricultural Extension Services, in fuller discharge of their statutory obligations to the entire farm population, provide educational assistance to agricultural laborers, especially migratory workers, to enable these people to increase their skills and efficiency in agriculture and to improve their personal welfare. The Extension Services should also give instructions to both farm employers and farm workers on their respective obligations and rights, as well as the opportunities for constructive joint planning in their respective roles as employers and employees.

The Agricultural Extension Services should expand their home-demonstration work to supply the families of farm workers, particularly migratory farm workers, instruction in nutrition, homemaking, infant care, sanitation, and similar subjects.

In substance, the Commission recommends that the Agricultural Extension Services assume the same responsibility for improving the welfare of farm workers as for helping farm operators.

(3) The Federal Government, in accordance with the long-standing policy that agricultural extension work is a joint responsibility of the Federal Government and the several States, share in the cost of the proposed educational program for farm workers and their families.

Appendix B

Excerpt From Underemployment of Rural Families

MIGRATORY FARM LABOR

Some underemployed farm families leave their farms during the harvest season and supplement their farm incomes by picking cotton, fruit, potatoes, tomatoes, or other crops; others forsake their farms entirely and attempt to make a living by following the crop harvest. Through years of varying economic conditions relatively permanent groups of workers have developed who meet the peak-season labor needs in various parts of the country. These are principally but not exclusively from farm sources. They have developed rather definite paths of movement from the winter work areas in Florida, south Texas, Arizona, and southern California to summer harvest areas in the north.

The number of people in this migratory work force has varied with crop conditions, prices of farm products, displacement by mechanization, and the general level of nonagricultural employment. It has also changed with the opportunity to go into urban occupations. According to a Nation-wide survey made in 1949 there were slightly more than 1,000,000 people over 14 years of age in this work force at that time.[6] This number includes several hundred thousand workers from across the Mexican border who compete with domestic labor for the work that is available.

Farm people who go into the migratory labor force do so from lack of better opportunity and then merely change to another and less secure type of underemployment. According to the survey previously mentioned, the average number of days of employment for migratory workers over the country in 1949 was 101, 70 days in farm work and 31 more in nonfarm employment.

Three factors enter into this underemployment. First, a period of several slack months when there is little seasonal employment to be found. Second, irregular and intermittent employment during the harvest season. Some harvests are oversupplied with workers, others last for such a brief period that the amount of work obtained by a worker is small. The third factor is too large a supply of workers for the amount of work available. Migratory workers compete with local seasonal and year-round workers for employment. The latter, too, then suffer from underemployment; during 1949, they had a total of 120 days' employment of which 91 days were in farm work and 29 in nonfarm jobs.[7]

The earnings from the 101 days of farm work which the migratory workers obtained in 1949 amounted to an average of $514.[7] The value of housing, transportation, and other perquisites amounts to $36 more.[8] At an average of two workers per family, total family incomes averaged $1,028 cash or $1,100 with perquisites. This amount had to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate a family of four.

Underemployment and low earnings are not the only problems among migratory farm workers. Poor housing, lack of sanitation and medical care, child labor, and educational retardation of the children, all tend to make them a disadvantaged group. They have little voice either in community, State, or national affairs and are unable to make effective demands to relieve their situation.

Although they are most essential to meet peak season demands for gathering in the national food supply, they are explicitly excluded from national legislation which protects and advances the rights of workers. Their position is the most precarious of any in our economy. They have no definable job rights and are so far removed from the employer group that they are unable to obtain redress for grievances.

Rather than hire seasonal and migratory workers directly and individually, it is a widespread practice among farm employers to hire in crews through labor contractors, crew chiefs, or labor recruiters. In many areas it is virtually impossible for a worker to obtain a job directly from the farm employer. As a consequence of these practices, a farm worker has to pay heavily from his already-too-low earnings for the privilege of getting work to do.

[6] Migratory Farm Workers in 1949, Louis J. Ducoff, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1950.
[7] Migratory Farm Workers in 1949, Louis Ducoff, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1949.
[8] Perquisites Furnished Hired Farm Workers, Barbara B. Reagan, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1945.

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